

WASHINGTON, DC—Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) today sent a letter to the Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Joseph Boardman, asking the FRA to evaluate recent engineering reports the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad (CORP) used to justify the immediate closure of the rail line between Coquille, Oregon and Vaughn, Oregon.

—Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) today sent a letter to the Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Joseph Boardman, asking the FRA to evaluate recent engineering reports the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad (CORP) used to justify the immediate closure of the rail line between Coquille, Oregon and Vaughn, Oregon.

DeFazio also asked the FRA to perform a physical inspection of the line and evaluate what, if any, repairs are necessary to make the line safe for operation. The FRA has had this CORP line under compliance review since December 2005 and last inspected the line in October 2006.

While there were known problems with the line, CORP never communicated with its customers or the Oregon Department of Transportation that the line had deteriorated so badly that an emergency closure might be necessary. The line is critical to shippers and industry along the south coast of Oregon. Yesterday, Georgia-Pacific announced it is stopping operations at its Coos Bay sawmill and that this stoppage is related to CORP's embargo of this line.

A copy of DeFazio's letter follows.

September 26, 2007

The Honorable Joseph Boardman

Administrator

Federal Railroad Administration

Mail Stop: 20 Room: 75

1120 Vermont Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Boardman:

I write to you regarding the recent decision by the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad (CORP) to embargo its line between Coquille, Oregon and Vaughn, Oregon in my congressional district.

On September 21st, CORP announced it was embargoing this line due to unsafe tunnel conditions. The CORP line is vital for shippers and industry along the south coast of Oregon and CORP gave no advance notice it would be shutting the line down, leaving shippers suddenly without a viable way to get their goods to market.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has had this CORP line under compliance review since December 2005 and last inspected a tunnel on the line in October 2006. While federal inspectors at the time did find Tunnel #15 to be in poor condition they did not issue an Emergency Order to close the line. While there were known problems with the CORP line, CORP never communicated to its customers or the Oregon Department of Transportation that the line had deteriorated so badly that an emergency closure might be necessary.

I respectfully request the FRA evaluate and respond to the findings in the engineering reports CORP used to justify the immediate closure of this line. I also request that FRA tunnel inspectors perform a physical inspection of the line and evaluate what, if any, repairs are necessary to make the line safe for operation. Finally, I would like to know what further operational constraints the FRA might put on the line to keep it running safely.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I look forward to learning the results of your evaluation and inspection. Given the gravity of the impact on businesses in my district from this sudden closure, I would appreciate a progress report on your investigation by October 12, 2007.

Sincerely,

PETER A. DEFAZIO

Member of Congress